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### THE NATIONAL UNITARIAN CONFERENCE.

THE readers of this Magazine have become acquainted with the proceedings of the conference through the reports of the secular press. They will get in this way, however, very imperfect and inadequate impressions of what was done and what is proposed to be done, as well as of the general spirit and tone of the meeting itself.

The convention at New York doubtless marks an era in the history of the Unitarian body, — if heretofore it has deserved the name of body. It was distinguished by two characteristics altogether new. It was strictly a representative body; not an accidental meeting of persons speaking for no one but themselves, but of persons whom the churches had selected, and sent thither. And they were represented, not by ministers mainly, but by laymen; as these latter constituted two-thirds of the delegates present. These laymen were men of the highest order of intelligence, many of them holding the first places of trust in the community, men of clear, practical wisdom, who evidently knew what they believed, and could give a reason for it.

Apprehensions and forebodings of evil preceded the meeting, preventing we know not how many churches from being represented. Some creed will be got up, it was said, and imposed upon the body; or the door will be thrown wide open to radicalism, which will come in and take control. Or

there will be a great "fight" between the two wings of the denomination, and a schism in consequence.

They met: many of the delegates sharing these vague apprehensions, and also the general feeling of uncertainty which one shares in stepping upon untrodden ground.

Dr. Clarke's sermon in the evening of Tuesday, recommending "a change of base," though well enough as he would explain the phrase, by no means allayed these apprehensions. So that, when the convention met the next morning, and ere its organization was complete, a distinguished layman brought in five distinct articles of faith, virtually a creed, which he proposed as the basis of the new organization. These articles were as follows:—

1. Belief in the Holy Scriptures as containing a revelation from God to man, and as deduced therefrom.

2. Belief in one God, the Father.

3. Belief in one Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, the Son of God, and his especially appointed messenger and representative to our race, gifted with supernatural power, "approved of God by miracles and signs and wonders which God did by him," and thus, by divine authority, commanding the devout and reverential faith of all who claim the Christian name.

4. Belief in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.

5. Belief in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection from the dead, and life everlasting.

Here was a very excellent creed, and probably nine-tenths of the meeting so regarded it. But they thought its introduction ill-timed, and laid it upon the table; not, however, till it had developed, very decidedly, the two opposite lines in the convention, which were reserving their fire.

The convention then went to work, putting off this matter of a creed for the last stage of the proceedings, and giving it in careful charge to a committee of twelve, representing all shades of opinion. The work of the convention consisted mainly of three things:—

Hearing reports from the various associations existing within the denomination, that the whole field of operation might

## RANDOM READINGS.

## ENGLISH SYMPATHY.

PERHAPS it is not wise to question the genuineness of the sympathy proffered to us by the English nobility in our great national bereavement. But when those *thirteen thousand prisoners* at Andersonville were being murdered, or starved to death, and as many more at Richmond, Salisbury, and Danville; when the loyal people of East Tennessee were shot down on their own hearth-stones, or before their doors, in presence of their wives and children; when the colored prisoners of Fort Pillow after surrender were butchered with English guns and bayonets; when loyal men throughout Dixie were hunted into caves by bloodhounds, or hung upon the limbs of trees; and when all this was within the nation which Mr. Gladstone said was "created" by Jefferson Davis, it strikes us that English sympathy would have come with as much propriety and grace, and very likely would have prevented the great wickedness which only consummated these barbarities. Jefferson Davis was eulogized by the English minister with plaudits, and "Hear, hear!" Mr. Lincoln was scorned, and jeered at. The portraits of each were exhibited; one as the finished gentleman, the other as an outlandish boor. If Mr. Lincoln's assassination had been a great success, and Southern independence had been achieved thereby, we should have had small condolence from the English nobility, who, for three years, had been the patrons of pirates, of the murderers of helpless prisoners, and the robbers of graves. It alters the case when the "nation" which Jefferson Davis "created" has crumbled in pieces, and the finished gentleman is running from the gallows disguised in petticoats; when the nation preserved by Abraham Lincoln comes strong and whole out of the storm of battle; when four millions of slaves drop their fetters at his word, and emerge into the glorious prerogatives of manhood; when the true and the good everywhere rise up to call him blessed, and a great people is weeping tears of love and sorrow over his

bier. We hope none of us will be again deceived, or suppose that the English aristocracy, whether in our prosperity or adversity, regard us with any thing but aversion and hate. But, for the sake of the English *people*, on whose mighty heart we have leaned for sympathy all through our great agony, let us strive after peace, and maintain it. And when *their* struggle comes on apace, when their day of emancipation and enfranchisement into all the prerogatives of English freemen is drawing nigh, may the heart of the republic beat with them, — the republic whose cause they have cheered on in its hour of peril as the cause of universal liberty and the sacred rights of mankind !

S.

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### GLEANINGS FROM FOREIGN PERIODICALS.

LINES of railway are being established in Asia Minor. It sounds oddly to read of them as connecting places once reached by the bleeding feet of the apostles. Think of Paul and John as going from Ephesus to Smyrna in the first-class express-train ! They could do that if they lived in these days. There has lately been opened to public travel a railway about fifty miles long between these two cities. Anglican enterprise is at the bottom of this undertaking. Spacious station-houses have been erected, and a hope is cherished of developing a large traffic ; but at present a single daily train renders sufficient accommodation.

IN zeal for missionary labor, no class of Christians equals the Roman Catholic ; and few persons who have visited the College of the *Propaganda*, in Rome, where almost every language spoken on the face of the earth is taught to those in training for missionary life, will forget the impression there derived of the earnest and almost ubiquitous efforts of that Church. It says, that in Judea alone it employs no less than 2,056 Italian priests, of whom 490 are Jesuits, 442 Capuchins, and 215 are Franciscans.

IF one should undertake to describe all the strange and, in some senses, cruel customs that are still observed in the old cities of Europe, the inheritance of former ages, we might obtain a very lively idea of our good fortune in this country in escaping the past. A French paper says, that, in Berlin, apothecaries are still forbidden to prepare medical prescriptions for sick Jews. It adds, that